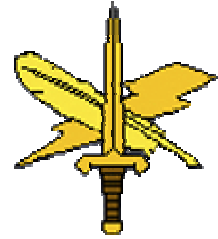




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K-STATE COACH WRAPS UP MONTH'S OBSERVANCE

By Anna Morelock
Staff writer

Kansas State University Head Football Coach Ron Prince spoke to Soldiers and civilians about building strong families and teams May 1 at the Soldier and Family Support Center. Prince's visit concluded a month of activities planned by the Family Advocacy Program as a part of April's Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month.

"The job is the same wherever you go," Prince said. "The job is to get the right kind of people into your organization and then to try and train those people as specifically as you can." What makes his job at K-State different from other coaching jobs is the fact that he grew up in this area, he stated.

Prince spoke about Kansas history and encouraged people to take pride in the state and especially in the diversity of the Fort Riley-Junction City area.

When the time came for Kansas to choose to be a free or slave state, the people chose freedom, Prince said. "That is our legacy. That's who we are," he stated. "Because of that we have an atmosphere of tolerance, an atmosphere of inclusion that is very unique."

Prince said he didn't fully appreciate that fact growing up, but said he later realized when living and coaching in other states. Issues the people of Kansas resolved long, long ago, he said, were still being dealt with in those states as late as the 1980s.

Another thing Prince said he realized while away from Kansas was that football is the greatest of all team games. There is a diversity of skill – big guys, little guys, fast guys, strong guys, kickers, linemen, quarterbacks, linebackers – and people can watch the NFL drafts and see that all of them have value, he added.

Prince said the people of Junction City and surrounding areas also value diversity. Prince's best friend while growing up was of Polish decent. Behind Prince lived a man who had married a German woman after World War II. Across the street lived a man

from Alabama who married a woman from Korea. Next door was a couple from Louisiana. On the other side lived a couple from Puerto Rico.

Prince said he was lucky to grow up in such an atmosphere of diversity, and that during the time he never really gave it a second thought.

Now Prince said he credits his upbringing for his confidence today. There is really no social activity he could go into, he said, where he would not be comfortable because of growing up in such a diverse town, and that continues to be an advantage to area kids.

"I've lived the life that many of you are living and that many of your children are having the chance to live, and I can tell you that I think I've had a tremendous advantage," Prince said. "I think that you have an advantage here by having such a melting pot."

Before Prince's speech, attendees listened to two songs performed by the Junction City High School Men's Ensemble.